

via fax: 011 504 239 3298 Sr. Porfirio Lobo Sosa President of the Republic of Honduras	via fax: 011 504 220 1756 Sr. Oscar Alvarez Minister of the Interior of Honduras
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November 11, 2010

Dear Sirs:

We are extremely concerned for the safety of a **lawyer working for the human rights organization Association for a More Just Society** (Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa – ASJ) who was abducted by two unknown men in Tegucigalpa on October 19 at 2.15pm. Two men approached the lawyer (who has asked not to be named) while she was negotiating a price with a taxi driver outside the ASJ office, forced her into the taxi with them and ordered the driver to follow their directions. The two men exchanged a gun between them. During the 40-minute ordeal they asked the lawyer questions about her work, which she refused to answer, and threatened her with death. The men said to each other, "You know we were paid to execute her ...we have to carry out the plan." After arguing, the abductors quickly dropped the lawyer on the street in front of a hardware store and drove away in the taxi.

The lawyer was previously intimidated on September 21 in the offices of the Secretary of Labor where she was looking at documents on labor laws that protect cleaners and security guards. A woman advised the lawyer to drop her investigation into security companies because of the personal risks involved. She asked if the research focused on SETECH (a private security company) and reminded the lawyer of the case of the ASJ lawyer, Dionisio Díaz García, who was killed in 2006 because of similar work. A few minutes later, a man arrived and warned, "Look, there are former army officers in security companies ... they have hit-men...leave this job and go away from this institution." The lawyer told him she was simply a legal consultant and was not looking at any company in particular.

In light of these incidents we **strongly urge** you to:

- conduct an independent, thorough and impartial investigation into the incident and the threats against the ASJ lawyer, make the results public, and bring those responsible to justice;
- take immediate steps to provide appropriate protection to the victim, in accordance with her wishes.

Sincerely,

Brian J. Stefan Szittai
Coordinator

cc: Asociación para una Sociedad más Justa ~ US mail
Jorge Ramón Hernández Alcerro, Ambassador of Honduras to the US ~ via fax: 1 202 966 9751
Hugo Llorens, US Ambassador to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 236 9037
Jeremy Spector, Attaché for Human Rights and Labor, US Embassy to Honduras ~ via fax 011 504 236 9320
Gabriela Zambrano, Honduras Desk, US State Dept ~ via fax: 1 202 647 3482
Dinah Shelton, US member of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights ~ fax: 202 458 3992
US Senators Brown & Voinovich ~ via email
US Representatives Boccieri, Fudge, Kaptur, Kucinich, LaTourette, Latta, Ryan, Space, Sutton, Wilson ~ via email

UA228/10/Honduras

The following people hereby urge you to take action on this matter as indicated in this letter: